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Medieval Dream: Vision of Tradition and Reality

A paper

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

﴿ إِذْ قَالَ يُوسُفُ لَأَبِيهِ يَا أَبَتِ إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ أَحَدَ
عَشَرَ كَوْكَبًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ رَأَيْتُهُمْ لِي
سَاجِدِينَ ﴾

صدق الله العلي العظيم

(سورة يوسف / ٤)

Dedication

To :

*The source of patience, optimism and hope,
the best example of this life:*

My beloved mother

*The first teacher in my life, my great heart and
honor:*

My father

*The dear ones who help me throughout my
studies:*

My brothers and sisters

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Abstract

The typical dream vision is a medieval work of literature which takes advantage of medieval dream psychology's acceptance of the notion that some types of dreams could communicate wisdom to the dreamer. The source of this dream might be God (a truly prognostic "visio"), the devil (sometimes a form of sexual temptation like an incubus or succubus), or natural causes.

The traditional dream vision, or visio, follows a clear structure in which the narrator falls asleep, dreams, and wakes with a vow to remember the lesson of the dream, thus leading to the poem itself. The form became popular in the 14th century, was used heavily into the 15th century, and remains relevant to the modern concept of dreams within literature. Throughout my presentation, I examine the dream vision form as a literary device grounded in a historical basis from its origins to its usage during the middle Ages.

Chapter One

1.1 Dream Vision

A dream vision, sometimes known as a visio, is a literary device in which a dream or vision is described as having revealed information or the truth that the dreamer or visionary would not normally be able to access in a normal waking state. Though dreams have always been a common occurrence in literature, the genre of visionary literature emerged quite suddenly and is particularly prevalent in early medieval Europe. Dream visions, whether from antiquity or the Middle Ages, are frequently perceived as having divine origins. The genre reappeared during the Romantic period, when people believed that dreams were imaginative portals to worlds beyond reason. (Wilson, 1993:11)

Dream vision is an important and well-known medieval narrative genre in poetry. The basic framework is that the confused narrator falls asleep and dreams, and then his dream will be the main story. The dream often takes the form of allegory, enigmatic, and it needs a kind of interpretation on the part of the reader. After the troubled narrator is awakened, he determines to write his dream in a poem. (Ruud, 2006:191)

Dream vision poetry has an impressive and extensive image, which has been widely commented upon. Falling asleep, dreaming, dream vision, prophetic visitations and oracular guidance are familiar motifs from several widely known literary sources, for example in the Bible, Greek and Latin classics, continuing into late antiquity and the medieval period . (Kruger, 1992:191)

Dream visions have important elements in common, firstly, all dream visions are written in the first person. The narrator becomes the dreamer and tells the story as his own experience. Sometimes, the dreamer becomes the protagonist of the dream fiction, and other times, he is only an observer as in Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*. Second, the dream depicts an illuminating experience, one in which the dreamer crosses boundaries into a supernatural or mystical world that somehow reproduces the world he left and to which he must return, like Chaucer's narrator in *The Parliament of Errors* (1382). Who visits the Temple of Venus and the Garden of the Gods of Nature. The dreamer of the pearl has the paradise vision sharing his lost pearl on the train of the Virgin Mary. Third: The dream contains an important lesson for the dreamer. Often the dreamer appears in a state of depression or mental confusion before he sleeps, it means that he is disturbed and suffering from an unresolved difficulty and the dream will help him solve his problem. For example, the dreamer in *Parliament of Errors* begins reading a book to learn certain things but falls asleep and the dream appears to be the answer to his problem. (Ruud, 2006:191-192)

There are two important functions of dream vision. The first is that it provides a framework for the narrative and gives the writer the opportunity to discover different levels of narrative, and investigate the role of the narrator and his relationship to the narrative. Secondly, the genre becomes 'self-reflexive' as at the end of Machott's '*Fonteinne Amoureuse*' (1360_1362), where he tells the narrator that he will go and write down the dream he has just had. The dream reveals the interior of the narrator's mind and suggests the troubled narrator to look within himself to explore the solution to his dilemmas as in William Langland's *Piers Plowman* (1377),

when the dreamer is in the middle passage, woe. Engages in debates with metaphorical figures of intelligence, study, reason, and the imaginative qualities of his mind. (Sauer, 2008: 152)

The dream vision genre may include serious moral or religious themes or sometimes deal with comic or romantic secular love poems such as Chaucer's House of Fame, allegorical political debates such as The Winner and the Prodigal (1352-1353), or even satire such as Book Three of the science fiction Famous series. Elegies of Matthew 1 (1295). It contains a vision of heaven, where the married man will receive the highest honor because of the great suffering he suffered in this world. (Ibid)

In a way, experiences that fall on opposite ends of a spectrum are dreams and visions. While many people report experiencing this activity on a nightly or semi-nightly basis, the former represents an activity that almost every human experiences at some point in their lives, and the latter represents supernatural excursions experienced by a select few. Dream content can be anything from prophetic and divine to ordinary and meaningless. In contrast to the popular tradition started by Sigmund Freud, which views modern dreams as merely unconscious reactions to waking stimuli, some medieval dreams were interpreted as possible messages from God and are treated as such in both Old and Middle English literature. (Ruud, 2006:191)

The phrase "dream" or "vision" Narratives that employ dreams or visions as an artistic device are generally referred to as literary works. All attempts at categorizing the myriad forms of literary dreams or visions prove fruitless; they are all referred to as dreams, visions, or dream visions,

regardless of their religious or secular nature, timing relative to sleep or wakefulness, didactic nature, or whimsical playfulness. An author can tell the story of a dream within a larger, distinct context, or he can use the dream as the inspiration for the entire piece. The dream can be presented in two ways: directly and concisely, or subtly and artistically. "I will declare the best of the dreams I dreamt" is the sufficient transition from the world of reality to the dream world for one author, while another may approach the dream by elaborate descriptions of circumstances that led to it. The recounted dreams or visions serve various purposes. Many, especially in the early Christian tradition, were eschatological; the dream section in the Shepherd of hermas may perhaps be instanced. Some attempt to inculcate moral truths; piers plowman is an example. (Jones, 2004: 293-294)

1.2 Medieval Age

The middle Ages are thousand-year periods in European history. Scholars mention the beginning and end of this period in the fifth and late fifteenth centuries AD, respectively. The end of this period coincides with the Renaissance. Since this period falls between the Greek, Roman, and Modern periods, historians have called it the Middle Ages (Baugh & Cable, 2002:8).

To highlight the influence of the performance of Greek philosophers on medieval philosophers, some historians date the beginning of the era to the first or second century. Moreover, others believe that the beginning of the middle Ages and Christianity are contemporary, and because of this coincidence, the thought and reason of this period are called Christian

thought. Historians have described this era as a movement of conservatism and continuous migration of other nations into the land. In the new Western historiography, this thousand-year period is remembered as the medieval history of Europe. In other words, the Middle Ages is a period in European history that separates ancient time from the modern era (Wallace, 1999:32).

Medieval literature is a broad term to define the parts of literary work from the Middle Ages, which lasted from about 500-1500 AD. During the Middle Ages, literature shifted from Latin to the vernacular, and oral stories began to be recorded. Medieval literature centered around religious stories, moral teachings and romantic love (Beer, 1992: 34).

Medieval literature was done by hand. The period began and ended with the unwelcomed arrival of two conquerors including the conquest of Normans in 1066, and the printing press in 1476. English literature survived the first conquest with difficulty. When the first printed English books appeared, the phase of Middle English was virtually over. As a result of the emerging printing press, the language had assumed its modern form except in the spelling layer. A distinctive stylistic feature of the period was a rapid expansion in the number of words which often entered the language from Latin and mostly from French (Behtash, 2012:36).

English literature of the Middle Ages is a comprehensive and wide topic that includes necessarily all the written works available in Europe and beyond during the Middle Ages. Western and Central Europe was dominated by the Roman Catholic Church as well as the other parts of Europe never Romanized spoke in Latin that was language of Roman

Catholic Church. That was because Church was virtually the only source of education. Furthermore, Latin language was the common language for medieval writings. But the condition in Eastern Europe was completely different. The Eastern Europe which was under the control of the Eastern Roman Empire and the Eastern Orthodox Church made the languages of Old Church i.e. Slavonic and Greek, the dominant languages (Horobin & Smith, 2002:19).

1.3 Appraisal Theory

The psychological theory known as "appraisal theory" holds that feelings may be derived from our assessments, or estimations, of the events that give rise to certain reactions in various individuals. In essence, our evaluation of a circumstance results in an affective, or emotional, reaction that is predicated on that evaluation. Going on a first date is one instance of this. When a date is seen positively, people may experience happiness, joy, giddiness, excitement, and/or anticipation because they believe the event will likely have favorable long-term implications, such as launching a new relationship, being engaged, or even getting married. On the other side, our feelings may include hopelessness, melancholy, emptiness, or terror if the day is seen unfavorably. It becomes crucial to reason and comprehend one's emotional response for next evaluations. The appraisal theory's capacity to account for individual differences in emotional responses to the same experience is one of its key features. (Scherer et al, 2001:16)

Emotion appraisal theories postulate that, even in the absence of physiological arousal, people's judgments and explanations of their

circumstances give rise to emotions. The structural approach and the process model are the two fundamental methods. Both the assessment of emotions and the various ways in which emotions might evolve are explained by these theories. When there is no physiological arousal, our decision about how to feel about a situation is made after the phenomenon has been analyzed and explained. Thus, the order of events is as follows: thinking, arousal and emotional events occurring simultaneously, and event. This theory has been applied by social psychologists to describe and forecast coping strategies and individuals' emotionality patterns. (Aronson et al., 2005:15)

On the other hand, personality psychology does not consider an individual's assessment or cognitive reaction to a given scenario since it views emotions as a consequence of an individual's personality. The study of personality psychology involves examining the elements that shape individuals' distinctive characteristics as well as their similarities. (Aronson et al., 2005:15)

By measuring affect and emotion, appraisal theory has grown over the past several decades to become a well-known theory in the fields of psychology and communication. The most fundamental ideology in history comes from the writings of some of the greatest thinkers, including Aristotle, Plato, the Stoics, Spinoza Hume, and even the pioneering German psychologist Stumpf. But because to the hard work of two eminent scholars who have contributed appraisal ideas during the past fifty years—Magda Arnold and Richard Lazarus, among others—this theory has grown enormously. (Scherer et al, 2001:21)

1.4 Rhetorical Device

According to Sonja K Foss and Cindy L. Griffin (2017:2) defines rhetoric as, the human use of symbols to communicate, arguing that in addition to the written and spoken word, rhetoric, includes no discursive or nonverbal symbols, like (but not limited to), television programs, films and videos game, art, architecture, and advertisements.

Many techniques are used to use certain types of sentence building; thus, they are also known as persuasive devices. Rhetoric is the art of persuasion using inventive approaches. Harris (2018:2) introduced a collection of resources to enhance the effectiveness and engagement of writing. Figurative language, which includes "the use of words in special, unusual ways: either in unusual arrangements or with special and unusual meaning," is another name for rhetorical tactics. The goal is to give writing more strength, clarity, and intrigue in order to make it more compelling and engaging. Rhetorical devices give the reader mental models that make it easier for them to comprehend the text's meaning.

A rhetorical device is a literary device that directs the audience's attention toward a certain goal by employing a particular tone, pattern of meaning, or sentence structure. Every rhetorical device is a stand-alone instrument that may be used to develop an argument or strengthen one that already exists. It is a strategy or word choice intended to make a point or persuade an audience. It is often referred to as a stylistic device, a persuasion device, or just rhetoric. And everyone uses them: businesspeople, politicians, and even your favorite novels. Every time you attempt to

enlighten, convince, or dispute someone, you are using rhetoric. (Blume, 2019: website)

1.5 Types of Rhetorical Devices

Rhetorical devices are roughly divided into the following four categories: (Regmi, 2015: 77-78)

1-Logos: Devices in this category attempt to persuade and persuade through logic and reason, and typically use statistics, cited facts, and statements from authorities to make their point and persuade the listener.

2- Pathos: These rhetorical devices are based on emotions. This could mean eliciting sympathy or pity from the listener or enraging the audience to inspire action or change their mind about something .

3- Ethos: Ethical appeals attempt to convince the audience that the speaker is a credible source, that their words carry weight and must be taken seriously because they are serious and have the experience and judgment necessary to decide what is correct.

4. Kairos: This is one of the most difficult concepts in rhetoric; Devices in this category are dependent on the notion that the time has come for a particular idea or action. The very timeliness of the idea is part of the argument.

Chapter Two

2.1 Medieval in Literature

The term "medieval" refers to a wide range of literary works produced between roughly 500 and 1500 CE. Latin literature gave way to vernacular writing during the Middle Ages, and oral storytelling started to be documented. Romantic courtly love, moral lessons, and religious tales were the main themes of medieval literature. (Ruud, 2006:191)

The Medieval period, also called Middle or Dark Ages, got its name from the Latin word *medium*, which means middle and *alvum*, meaning age. It was called the Middle ages because scholars believed it was between two important periods which are the Classical Period and the Renaissance. During this period which covers a time from ca. 450-1450 Britain saw many invasions, unrests, battles and changes which shaped Britain into a powerful country. The medieval period is a long period and it is divided into three lesser periods which are the Anglo-Saxon period, the Anglo-Norman period, and the Middle English period. In the following, these periods will be commented on with a focus on historical, cultural, political, economic, and social changes. The literature of each period will be discussed and important authors, their works, dominant genres, and examples will be given. (Mattern, 2012:8)

To understand the developments during the medieval ages, it is best to first look at the early history of Britain which starts with the migration of Celtic tribes in 500 BCE. They were "a loose grouping of societies, often at odds with one another, with no overarching administrative authority or social coherence" (Black et al., 2011:5).

These European Iron Age people were later named "Celts" by historians. They lead a tribal life with warrior kings or queens, they lived in hill forts, they introduced iron and tools and formed trading relationships. Their religious leaders were called Druids and they worshipped nature gods. But not much is known about the Celts because there are no records about their life, culture, history, etc., and everything that is known was passed on through oral literature. In the first century BC, Rome was growing stronger and the Roman Empire was expanding its territories. After two unsuccessful attempts, in 43 AD, England and parts of Wales were conquered by the Roman Empire under Emperor Claudius and became the province Britannia. The Romans built big cities, villas, proper streets, viaducts, baths, they expanded trade and introduced a tax system. Latin became the language of the ruling class. In 120 AD, the famous Hadrian's Wall was built. Most of the Celtic population was Romanized. The Britons became Christians after Christianity began to spread in the Roman Empire in the fourth century with the conversion of Emperor Constantine. After ruling on the island for over 300 years, the Roman Empire began to lose its power, and Rome was in danger from various barbarian tribes. So, the legions withdrew from Britain to defend their territory. They abandoned Britain in 400 AD. (Mattern, 2012:7)

According to Golban (2007:23), literature in the Middle Ages was international rather than local. Medieval poetry was divided by lines of class and audience rather than language although; Latin was the language of the church and education:

1- The 3rd and 4th centuries were called Patristic Latin times. This period marked the beginning of Christian poetry as inspired by the works of St. Ambrose, who wrote poetry mostly for the church.

The Monastic period was the period where the desire for Latin poems had increased.

2- However, between the 7th and 10th centuries, poems written did not have much originality. Most of the poems were imitations of Christian songs. The Revival of Latin Literature between the 11th and 12th centuries brought about secular medieval poetry as well as new forms and styles of writing medieval poems. It was during this period that epics, satires, epigrams, elegies, and tales were written and became very popular.

3- The 12th and 13th centuries were marked by the increase in education and the church's control over it. It was called the Scholastic period. During this time, medieval religious poems flourished. It was also marked by the appearance of mystical, passionate, and personal medieval poems.

Medieval English Poetry was not written. They were passed on by mouth from generation to generation by travelling musicians called troubadours and minstrels. These aristocratic men were poets who were originally from the southern part of France. They were also referred to as Trouveres. Poems during the medieval period were perpetually linked with music, even the legendary tales of King Arthur and the Knights of the Roundtable were said to have originated from the music and poetry of the English and Welsh Bards, which eventually were included in the lyrics of these travelling musicians. (Greenblatt et al., 2006:17)

Chapter Three

Dream and Reality in William Blake

3.1 *Dream*'s Summary

In *Dream*, Blake portrays the concept of the return to innocence from experience. No wonder the artist thought of including it in “Songs of Experience” at first, finally deciding to move it back to “Songs of Innocence” (according to the Blake Digital Text Project). The theme of the child who is lost and later found is also present in the character of Emmet (ant) who is given the privilege of capitalisation to show its personification; also in the ant's children, and even maybe in the narrator's person. There is a strong presence of the natural world, very much admired by Blake, and his means toward mysticism, notably in contrast with Wordsworth's “‘atheistic’ love of nature”. Also, the concept of guidance and protection appears through the text in different forms, as a means to return to a lost innocence. (Keller-Privat, 2007: 26)

Isabelle Keller-Privat describes “A Dream” as a piece that, like other Songs of Innocence poems, “emphasizes the interconnections between the actors, the voices and the rhythms that give the poem its coherence and harmony.” This coherence and harmony give the poem its sense of innocence. The world of this poem is portrayed as friendly and the characters are helpful. Yet a hint of experience can also be felt in “A Dream” through the emmet's fear of its surroundings and its tired, damaged appearance. The emmet has experienced hardship and separation beyond the innocence of the dream. (Ibid:27)

Dike writes that, by putting the dream's concerns into the world of an insect, Blake extends the “usual limits of sympathy. Resolution is found for the emmet through cooperation with the other characters of the dream. According to Dike, this introduces the theme that everyone is imperfect and needs help because the emmet requires the assistance of the narrator's sympathy, the glow-worm's rescue, and the beetle's guidance. (Dike, 1961:76)

3.2 Analysis of *Dream*

The Stanza One

*Once a dream did weave a shade,
O'er my Angel-guarded bed,
That an Emmet lost it's way
Where on grass methought I lay.*

In the first stanza of ‘A Dream,’ the speaker begins with the speaker describing how everything that’s about to follow is part of a dream. He had this dream while lying in the grass near his guardian angel. The speaker notes that there was an “Emmet,” or ant, that was lost in the grass, unable to find her way home. The next lines are filled with examples of personification. (Baldwin, 2021:Website)

Stanza Two and Three

*Troubled wilderd and forlorn
Dark benighted travel-worn,*

*Over many a tangled spray
All heart-broke I heard her say.*

*O my children! do they cry
Do they hear their father sigh.
Now they look abroad to see,
Now return and weep for me.*

The speaker says that the ant was “forlorn” and “benighted” from her travels. She is “All heart-broke,” he adds. The ant’s words are included in the next lines. She cries over her situation and wonders if her children and their father are worried about her. Are they crying, and do they hear “their father sigh,” she cries. Here, Blake uses personification to suggest that an ant can feel sorrow, as a human can, and can speak in a way that human beings can understand. This allows the speaker and those reading to better empathize with the ant’s plight. It also adds to the dream-like qualities of the poem. (Baldwin, 2021:Website)

Stanzas Four and Five

*Pitying I dropp’d a tear:
But I saw a glow-worm near:
Who replied. What wailing wight
Calls the watchman of the night.*

I am set to light the ground,

While the beetle goes his round:

Follow now the beetles hum,

Little wanderer hie thee home.

In the fourth stanza, the speaker cries for the ant, pitying her situation but seemingly unable to help her. It's at this point that the ant's savior comes into play, a glow-worm. This worm, which lights the path for beetles at night, tells the ant that she just needs to follow the sound of these beetles, and she'll find her way home. He uses the words "Little wanderer" to describe the ant, something that feels quite light-hearted and caring. (Baldwin, 2021:Website)

Chapter Four

Conclusion

The dream vision is a gorgeous different form which is used for several purposes in the middle Ages. It reached its highest fame in the late medieval period. Having a wide range of sources, including sources from the Bible to Boethius, dreams give authors the chance to arrive at strange dominions which bent the rules of time and space. The flexibility of the instructions which manage the world of dreams means that the form is used for comfort, advisory literature, spiritual and logical investigations, courtly comedy, social analysis, or mystical knowledge. In this regard, dream visions are some of the most charming works of the medieval period.

Medieval poets find the dream a functional means of structuring their writings as a metaphorical tool. It has many compensations; it ruses and connects the attention of spectators by engaging the widespread knowledge and by fascinating its elements to become psychoanalysts or interpreters. It also permits for the opening of unequal and actually incompatible substances. Further, it persuades and helps the use of unforgettable descriptions and allows the writer to disown accountability for what goes after. In addition, it summons a reliable and imposing ritual of creative thinker literature and offers a method of dealing with a large variety of subjects, including heavenly prediction, suggestive quest, political or thoughtful assumption, and apocalyptic vision. Furthermore, it presents a spot of entrance into the representative form (occasionally figurative) which is less restraining than the meeting of pragmatist narrative.

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